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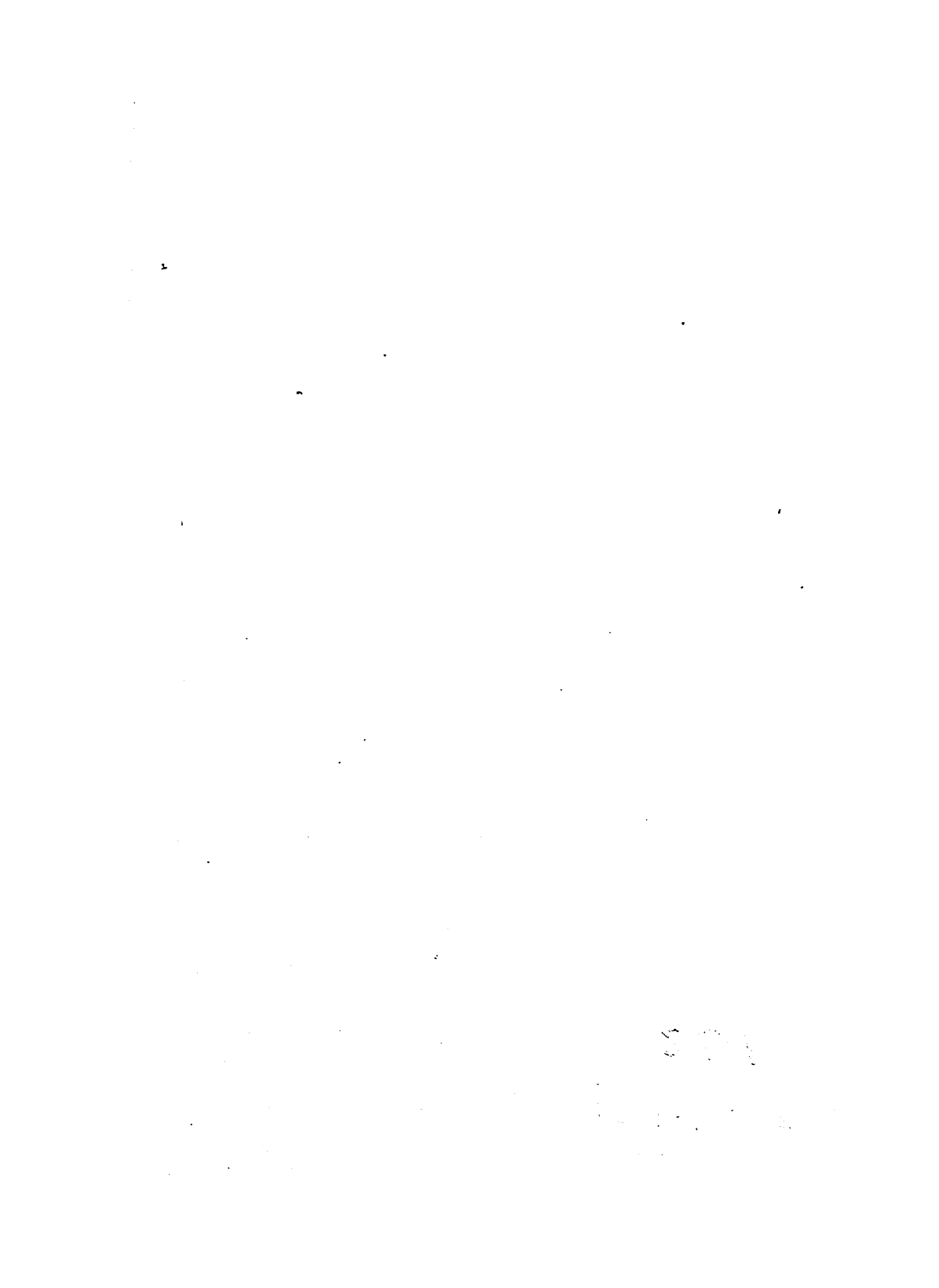
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# HEALTH FOR TEACHERS.

BY

M. J. BARNETT,

AUTHOR OF

PRACTICAL METAPHYSICS, &C.

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U.S.A.

BOSTON:

H. H. CARTER & KARRICK,

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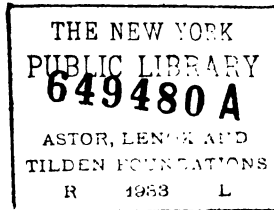
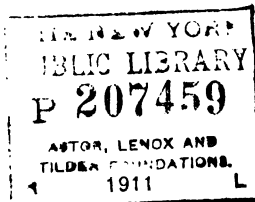
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ROY W. B.  
J. B. B.  
W. B. B.

## HEALTH FOR TEACHERS.

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There is no class of so-called brain workers that forms so large a part of the community as teachers. There is also no class in which more cases of hopelessly broken-down health are to be found, especially among the women of this profession. In accounting for this, they, with all the rest of the world, will talk about over-work, over-strained nerves, and over-taxed powers, when the truth of the matter is, that, if we searched the whole community through, we could scarcely find one instance of a teacher who has more to do than she is perfectly able to do with comfort to herself and others, *provided*, she does her work in the right way.

Now, the right way does not mean that she shall have all external conditions and circumstances so adjusted as to favor her, but it means that she shall hold herself in that harmonious condition of mind in which her work instead of being a tax will be only a healthful and pleasureable exercise of her powers, which at worst will

involve nothing more than a wholesome fatigue from which she easily recovers by sound, refreshing sleep.

"*Poor, worn-out teachers,*" as the phrase goes, is not the mere picture of such teaching as this a paradise to you? Yet it is attainable by every one of you. Whatever the human mind can conceive of in the way of harmony and perfection is attainable by that mind, and will, at some future time, be reached. Why not endeavor to reach that state of harmony now, instead of waiting for it to be slowly evolved through a process that is rendered difficult and painful by apathy and ignorance?

A teacher is perhaps the last person in the world who wishes to hear herself called ignorant. Yet how many of this class, who are learned in all the external manifestations of wisdom, have still to learn the alphabet of that wisdom in its interior working, that motive power which controls all these external things! They study effects, but learn nothing of causes. They are like a man, who, in trying to control the working of machinery, devotes his attention to wheels, levers, and cams, paying no regard to the engine at all.

We would say to all broken-down teachers that, if you think you are injured by your work,

you make a great mistake. It is not your work that does the harm; it is your own condition of mind. The reformation you need is not to be found in better school-rooms, or longer vacations, or more favorably disposed school committees, but in *yourselves*. This work of reforming yourself is a glorious work. It is an independent work. It is a convenient work. You need not rely upon any one but the Infinite Being to help you in this work. All your tools are to be found within yourself, and, as you carry yourself with you wherever you go, you can turn to profitable account every spare moment of your day and night. If you have no time to attend to the affairs that concern your highest interest, you have no time to live at all. If, instead of saying that you have no time to study the well-being of your mind and spirit, you would say that you have no time to be unhappy or ill, you would utter more rationality and more truth.

How can a busy teacher apply metaphysics to her life and her work, so as to better her mental and physical condition? Let her first realize the great truth that the cause of her undue exhaustion is in something outside of her work and within *herself*. Let her study to find that something. In each person it will be a little different something. With one it is cowardice, fear of

offending some one in power. With another it is anxiety. With another it is impatience and an habitual feeling of hurry. With another it is indulgence in envy, hatred or malice. Any one of these conditions of mind is a fruitful cause of ill health, and, accompanying the daily routine of work, may speciously lay its own guilt upon the most delightful occupation in the world. But do not be deceived by these appearances. Hunt for the real mischief worker and you will be sure to find it.

We know of a teacher whose health was injured, not by over-work, as her friends thought, but by moral cowardice. She was gentle and sensitive and her position was under a principal who was selfish and unjust. She loved her work and her pupils were fond of her, but the constant friction brought into her life by the injustice and imposition of one in power, whom she feared to offend, was like poison daily administered to her and shortly told upon the condition of her body. Now, it was not the wrong-doing of that principal that injured her; it was her own way of regarding it that worked the harm. She had not the courage to assert herself in the right, for fear of bringing some disadvantage to herself, and she repressed, but did not correct, a feeling of dislike towards the offender.

One who has not the courage to assert herself in the right has not the courage necessary for protection in good, sound health.

It is the greatest mistake in the world to fear the harm another can do you. When you are pursuing the right, no one can possibly do you an injury. Whatever you may bring upon yourself by doing right is always a good, a blessing to you, however harmful it may for the moment appear to your short-sighted vision. Think nothing about results. When a course is right, pursue it unflinchingly. By so doing you will, if this be your special weakness, have every chance of keeping your health.

A feeling of dislike towards a fellow being will in time destroy the most robust health. We have no right to dislike any human being. If one who is brought in contact with us is selfish and unjust, it is not her benighted condition that harms us; it is our way of regarding her that harms us. If we could meet such a person with a calm, friendly feeling, ready to do her good when the opportunity came, feeling towards her only that compassion which would be helpful to her and strengthening to ourselves, we would divest her of the power to injure our health. Such a course is but adherence to the teachings of Jesus. If you do not desire this condition of



mind as a religion, you certainly do desire it as a protection against ill health.

There are those who do everything with anxiety. It is perhaps so the habit of their mind that they are not conscious of it. Nevertheless, it is going on with its work of destruction in their bodies. Perhaps your anxiety is not connected with your teaching, but with some home or personal affair. If so, you must rid yourself of it in order to preserve health. If we trusted in the all wise and all loving Father, who, most of us believe, is both able and willing to take care of us, we would not be anxious about anything. We have only to proceed in accordance with our highest light, feeling sure that any result is the best possible result for us and for all concerned. Until we can arrive at this upright condition, we shall not be secure in health. There are many Marthas, in the churches as well as out of them, who are destroying their own health by the thousand anxieties accompanying even the smallest affairs of their life. This habitual condition of mind is the whole secret of their ill health. They may be teachers, but their teaching has nothing whatever to do with their decline.

A feeling of hurry is destructive of the nervous system and lays the foundation of no end of

organic diseases. There are those who try to do everything in the shortest possible time, as if time, and not their condition, was the all-important thing. Women of this habit of mind are said to be very nervous. It is thought that they are impetuous because their nerves are disordered, when the reverse is true. Their habit of mind has destroyed their nerves. Instead of trying to correct this habit, they perhaps pride themselves upon it and are irritated at not being able to bring others into a similar condition. How can you correct this habit? By cultivating patience. By getting full possession of your own soul. We all have a soul, but with some it is an inheritance to which they have not yet discovered their heirship. It is great wealth, but they do not yet know that it is theirs. Consequently, it has not become a source of revenue to them. Pause in the midst of your impatience and haste and hold your mind *still* for a moment. Tell yourself that you have ample time for the tranquil performance of every duty. In such a frame of mind you will be able not only to work without fatigue, but you will even accomplish more and better work in a given time, for you will be able to command your best powers.

An anxious reaching out into the future is a prodigal waste of mental energy. A student of

metaphysics told us that her first efforts at reformation in this respect were in connection with a piece of translation she had on hand to do. As she looked over it with her old feeling of hurry and anxiety, it seemed complicated, annoying and difficult. But, applying metaphysics and bringing her mind into harmony, she saw that it was something she was perfectly able to do without fatigue. Instead of allowing her mind to reach out over the whole and thus each day suffer the fatigue of crowding the work into one day, she set apart a certain number of pages for that day and took no thought of any beyond. The result was that she accomplished the whole amount better, in less time, and with less fatigue than ever before. We have only to-day to work in. To-morrow is never here. It is, therefore, only on the work of to-day that we should fix our minds.

A lady once arrived a little late for an appointment with us in a state of utter exhaustion. She said that the street car in which she came seemed never to have stopped so frequently before, and the horses seemed never to have moved so slowly, that her whole mind went out to push the horses along, and she was more tired than if she had done a whole day's work. What a waste of mental energy! We told her that, being neither

driver nor conductor, she had no control over the locomotion of the car. Therefore, she should not have wasted her mind by spending it in that direction. She should have turned all her efforts towards holding herself in a calm condition of mind, accepting the delay as now inevitable. All her mental agitation was just so much misdirected force, which, instead of effecting the good she desired, only injured her. She said she could not help being anxious. It is only rational and right that we *should* help being anxious. You will find that when you have taken the anxiety out of anything whatever, you have removed only a hindrance. If you are anxious about something you can remedy, then your force, instead of being wasted in anxiety, should be spent upon working the remedy. If you are anxious about something you cannot remedy, then your force is utterly wasted. You think it a pity to spend money on something perfectly worthless, yet this precious life-force, of which we are so prodigal, does more for us than all the money in the world. When you ask how you can gain necessary self-control, we reply that it can be done only by effort, like any other important work. School discipline is important, but self-discipline is the most important work you have to do.

Ambition, which, according to the general acceptation of the word, is inordinate desire for preferment, or superiority, or power, is a kind of selfishness, which, even when gratified to the utmost, forms no basis for health or happiness. When unsatisfied, it can undermine the most robust constitution. It is the canker-worm gnawing at the root of the tree, which destroys the possibility of good fruit. If we wish our circumstances in life to be bettered, we must first better ourselves. If we desire higher and better work than any that has yet fallen to our lot, the only sure way to get it is to place ourselves in a higher and better condition, then work corresponding to that improved condition will come to us. It is only by a conscientious and cheerful performance of the duty at hand that we can arrive at anything better. If you desire higher employment that you may be more highly considered by others, then your desire is founded on a wrong principle and will never bring you real success. Even if your aspirations are more noble and you desire better work that you may do more good, rest assured that such work will come to you when you are in the right condition to have it. A right condition of mind is always a harmonious condition, into which no inordinate desire can find entrance.

There are many false views regarding *better* work. Whatever work you have marked ability for and enjoy doing is good work for *you*. If you believe there is any intention at all regarding the line of your life, you must believe that the work you love to do and can do well is the work intended for you.

Suppose, for example, you are a primary teacher and aspire to be a principal, not because you would like the work better, but because it would give you what is called a higher position. You, who are an excellent primary teacher, might be a very poor principal. You have, perhaps, the beautiful gift of being able to impart knowledge to younger children, but would not feel at all at home in the duties of a principal. Then, remain in the primary department and be perfectly contented to remain there, even though you may not gain as much money by so doing. Endeavor to ennoble that department. Bring into it all your best thought and best feeling. Your talent is just as great a talent as that of a principal who has found her right place in what is called the higher department.

Even if you feel that you have a talent for something entirely different from your present occupation, the only sure way to it is in submitting yourself cheerfully to the duty of the hour.

The condition of cheerful submission to divine appointment is a harmony with fixed law that will, as soon as you are fitted for it, bring you the occupation you desire. He who has charge of even our minutest daily affairs knows exactly what we desire and loves to give it to us, just as soon as we are so in accord with His law that it will not lead us downward instead of upward. He knows what conduces to our happiness better than we, ourselves. How often we see a person sacrifice everything for money or position, and, after he has gained that which he thought would constitute his whole happiness, he is less happy than before. Inharmony with divine purpose does not bring happiness. Such is the law, and we cannot alter the law. We do well to let Him, who has shown Himself so capable of creating and preserving the universe in accordance with the highest love and wisdom, we do well to let Him plan for us and we turn all our efforts towards co-operating with Him in His plans. By contending against His plans we do not overthrow them; we only bring about confusion and unhappiness for ourselves. If your duty is difficult and unpleasant, instead of fretting away your mental energies and your bodily health by discontent, so school yourself that your work becomes even pleasant to you because it *is*

duty. Then you will be in a condition to have something better and you *will* have something better. We have only to make ourselves. Circumstances are but the natural, inevitable result of our own condition.

You are perhaps proud of your good discipline in the school-room; turn this ability inward upon yourself. You can check rising rebellion in the young assembly before you; then turn upon yourself and not only check but eradicate that rebellion, that desire to transgress the law instituted for your well-being, and save yourself the result of such transgression in mental discord and ill health.

It is impossible for one in an anxious or discontented condition of mind to have the best use of his intellectual powers. We are sometimes astonished at the good work we accomplish during seasons of tranquil happiness. Tranquility and happiness are the result of mental harmony, not discord. It is only by handling his tools in the right way that the artisan gets full use of them. It is only by holding ourselves in the right condition of mind and spirit that we gain a full use of our intellectual and spiritual powers. The injury that is done to the mind is sure to be reflected in the body. The decay at the root of the tree *will* extend to the branches.



Never consider ambition a point of strength, for it is a weakness. If you are an ambitious woman, constantly reaching out for some worldly good beyond your grasp, do not for a moment imagine it is your *work* that has broken down your health, for it is your own indulgence in a wrong condition of mind. If a child falls ill from constant crying for the moon, we do not feel that it is the monotony of his toys or the number of his hours in the nursery that made him ill, but his own irrational desire for something beyond his reach.

It seems that it would scarcely be necessary to tell a rational being that such positive vices as envy, jealousy and hatred are so reflected in the body as to generate all manner of diseases. Yet if this fact is known, it is frequently forgotten. Every time you indulge in even a dislike of any fellow being, the poison you thereby generate in mind is infused into your physical body and works therein no end of harm.

We know of a public school teacher whose health was failing, as all her friends thought, from over-taxed nerves. She was nursing a venomous dislike of a fellow teacher. She came into more light and strove conscientiously to rise up into a more harmonious condition, and succeeded in doing so. Her over-taxed nerves

became strong and her health became robust. She did not need drugs. She did not need leaves of absence from her duties. She did not need any other change than the one she gave herself; namely, a change in the condition of her mind. The cause of her decline was within herself, and she found the remedy within herself.

Why should teachers break down in health? Teaching is considered monotonous. It is no more monotonous than making shoes, and we do not expect a shoemaker to break down in health because of the monotony of his work, although he might easily lose his health if, with every peg that went into his shoe, he was driving imaginary spikes into the head of an enemy. You may say that intellectual work is more exhausting than physical labor, but why should a rational use of the intellect be more exhausting than a rational use of the hands? Why should a proper use of any power God has given us be harmful to us? We maintain that a rational exercise of the mind does us no more harm than a rational use of the body. We maintain, still further, that one who duly exercises all his powers, who endeavors to round himself out on all sides, has the best chance not only of strong intellectual ability, but also of sound physical health. To suppose that a person who exercises

only his physical powers, as they are called, is rewarded with a better condition of body than one who makes a rational use of every faculty is to take the ground that God has given us fine powers, the proper exercise of which will bring us a punishment in suffering. Engaging in a full day's mental work, such as teaching, is not making an irrational use of one's powers and could never in and of itself do one an injury.

Now, the first work of a teacher in endeavoring to regain the health she has lost, or to gain that which she may never have had, is to drive out of her mind the false belief that her necessary work can injure her. It can do nothing of the kind. Let her look anywhere and everywhere else for the cause of her decline. We would say the same to a carpenter, or one of any calling whatever, who would tell us that the monotony of his occupation and the number of hours—rational though they were—injured his health. When the real cause of injury is once discovered, earnestly set about removing it. If you examine your own condition of mind for even one day, you will be astonished at the number of inharmonious thoughts that you will find creeping in upon you. Some are so habitual with you that you would never be conscious of them were you not making a special examination of yourself.

A certain little table has perhaps stood in your room for years and years. Now, every time you enter your room you are not conscious of possessing that table. But, if you wish to appraise your possessions, you not only become conscious of possessing that table, but you set a just value upon it. Then, appraise your thoughts. Become conscious of them, and whether they belong to new or old conditions of mind, set a just value upon them. Know that every thought is imaged in your physical body. Harmonious thoughts form an image of health and beauty. Inharmonious thoughts form an image of disease and unsightliness. The disease is the photograph of the thought. If you would not have your body full of these unsightly likenesses of your mental and spiritual condition, you must change those conditions.

Go on with your work, feeling sure that what you *are* able to do is to perform the duties of each day as it comes, and be convinced that what you *cannot* afford to do is to indulge in one inharmonious thought or feeling.

There is health for every teacher in the land if it is only sought for in the right way. There is just as much health for teachers as for any one else, and for teachers who are working diligently year after year in their profession. Of course,

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a change in externals is pleasant and is advisable when convenient, but to consider it essential to health is to be a slave to these external things. The all-important change must be interior. It must be made within ourselves and by ourselves. The only way in which these outward changes are helps is in working an inward change, and they are beneficial only so far as they *do* work an inward change. We hear it said that a certain person had change of scene, but, as she carried her grief, or perhaps her anxiety, with her, the change failed to benefit her. This working upon externals is inconvenient and expensive, and the good resulting from it only temporary, at best. It is like plucking off the dead leaves from a tree, instead of nourishing the root that there may be no dead leaves. The interior change costs no money. It costs no time. It costs no strength. On the contrary, you will find that the harmony of your improved condition will give you more of all three. But what it does cost is mental and spiritual effort — an effort that all are capable of making, and in which, with the first earnest endeavor, all will receive abundant help from the Source of all power.

Turn your mind away from gross external aids to health, which are uncertain, clumsy and ineffi-

cient in comparison with the finer forces of your higher nature.

The work that may and in the future *will* be accomplished by our developed higher powers is altogether beyond our present conception, but we can now conceive of more than we attain to. If we do not endeavor to live up to the light now shed upon us, to employ for our elevation the means now within our reach, we shall find ourselves left sadly in the rear of that onmarching army of progression in which all must sooner or later enlist.

Teachers and learned spiritual scientists are less unfolded spiritually than the ignorant masses, because, in devoting themselves to matter, they are turning their backs upon spirit. A man who stands still on the road leading to his destination is nearer the desired point than one who travels in the opposite direction.

A teacher of mathematics would be ashamed of having spent no thought on the problem of squaring the circle. A teacher of history feels constrained to have his mind full of incidents and dates. A teacher of geography must be on the alert for every new town that springs up into existence in this vast United States. A teacher of English orthography must never forget that o-u-g-h is a combination of letters which — with-

out rhyme or reason — has six different pronunciations. All this knowledge, which is well in its way, is to them *so important* in training the young, while the only knowledge that gives a full value to this life and enables one to fulfil the destiny for which he is placed in this world is altogether overlooked.

There has been a complaint that the students of our highest colleges gain every kind of knowledge except that expressly for which they are placed in these institutions. Although teachers may not be wasting their best energies in frivolity and impurity, yet are they not, for the most part, eagerly seeking every kind of knowledge except that which they were expressly sent into the world to gain? A knowledge of their own higher powers would enable them to develop themselves into beings capable of the highest service to the whole brotherhood of humanity.

Teachers, as a matter of mere intelligence, to speak of nothing higher, should be in the advance ranks of those eager for a knowledge of the higher potencies of our being. If you are not so unfolded that you seek this knowledge as a religion, as necessary sustenance for your souls, as a sacred philosophy to live by and enlarge your usefulness, then seek it on that low plane on which you stand and apply it to the patching

up of your physical bodies, for it surely *will* accomplish also this lower work.

You, who have charge of training the young, have an immense field of influence. There is no good that, with sufficient knowledge and earnestness of purpose, you might not accomplish.

When you are yourselves fully convinced of the great truth that your every weakness and ailment is but a likeness of some error in your own mind, you will teach the young to be more ashamed of their diseases than of any deficiency in the prescribed branches of learning.

There will then be health alike for teachers and pupils.



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